

# SPECIFIC NAMES REPEATED IN THE LINNEAN GENUS FORMICA.

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My friend Mr. Donisthorpe published, nearly three years ago,<sup>1</sup> an article on a well-known list of ants from the environs of Nice, inserted by Leach in 1825 into the "Zoölogical Record." Mr. Donisthorpe has been no more successful than myself in solving the enigmas which, under the title of descriptions, were submitted by the old English author to his readers.

I should have had no occasion to revert to the matter had not Mr. Donisthorpe decided to replace the name *Formica picea* Nylander (1846) by *F. transkaukasica* Nasonow (1889), because the name *F. picea* Leach antedates *F. picea* Nyl., and notwithstanding the fact that both insects, in our present nomenclature, have been placed in very different genera.

To be consistent, however, it would be necessary to change many other names, and, not to go beyond the list of Leach's names, also the following:

*F. affinis* Leach (1825), Myrmecinarum genus? and *F. affinis* Le Guillou (1841), *Polyrhachis*, have priority over *F. affinis* Schenck (1851), *Lasius*.

*F. testaceipes* Leach (1825), Myrmecinarum genus? has priority over *F. testaceipes* F. Smith, *Camponotus*.

There are, I believe, certain principles which should be applied only *cum grano salis*, i. e., only when they are practical and useful, and should be abandoned when they merely create embarrassment and confusion. Such is the principle of priority in zoological nomenclature, which certain entomologists have pushed to most regrettable extremes.

For my part, I shall continue to designate *Formica picea* by the name which was applied to it by Nylander in 1846; *Lasius affinis* Schenck and *Camponotus testaceipes* F. Smith, by the names consecrated by the usage of more than half a century, and I count

<sup>1</sup> The Entom. Record, Vol. 30, p. 8-9 (1918).

on the assent of the majority of entomologists, at least in continental Europe.

I have carefully gone over the seventh volume of the "Catalogus Hymenopterorum" of Dalla Torre, in quest of names of the Linnean genus *Formica* which have been repeated, and have found the following interesting particulars:

*F. longipes* Latr. (1802), *Pheidole*, has priority over *F. longipes* Jerdon (1851), *Plagiolepis*, and *F. longipes* Gerstæcker (1858), *Camponotus*. Through my attribution of Latreille's species to the genus *Pheidole*, *Ph. longipes* Pergande will have to take the new name, *Ph. grallipes*, proposed by Wheeler.

*F. pilosa* Olivier (1791), synonym of *Camponotus fulvopilosus* De Geer, has priority over *F. pilosa* F. Smith (1857), *Camponotus (Colobopsis) = Colobopsis pubescens* Mayr (nec Fabricius) = *C. (Colobopsis) leonardi* Emery (1889). This species should take the latter name.

*F. pallens* Le Guillou (1841) = *Camponotus* sp., near *chloroticus* Emery, has priority over *F. pallens* Nylander (1849), *Camponotus*. The latter should take a new name. I propose *C. nylanderi*.

*F. thoracica* Olivier (1791), genus? has priority over *F. thoracica* Fabricius (1804), *Camponotus*. This case is identical with the homonymies of Leach's species and of subsequent authors, noted at the beginning of this article. I therefore propose that *C. thoracicus* Fabr. be retained.

Nearly the same state of affairs is encountered in the following cases:

*F. abdominalis* Latreille (1802), genus? *Formicinarum* seu *Dolichoderinarum*, and *F. abdominalis* Fabr. (1804), *Camponotus*.

*F. badia* Latreille (1802), *Pogonomyrmex*, and *F. badia* F. Smith (1857), *Camponotus*.

*F. carinata* Fabricius (1804), *Polyrhachis*, and *F. carinata* Brullé (1840), *Camponotus*.

*F. erythrocephala* Fabricius (1775), *Leptomyrmex*, and *F. erythrocephala* Christ, *Camponotus*.

*F. fervens* Drury (1782), *Atta*, and *F. fervens* F. Smith, *Camponotus*.

*F. foetida* Linne (1758), Olivier (1791), *Neoponera*, *F. foetida*

De Geer (1773), Myrmecinarum genus, and *F. foetida* Buckley (1866), *Forelius*.

*F. incisa* Schenck (1852), *Lasius*, and *F. incisa* F. Smith (1858), *Formica*?

*F. nana* Latreille (1802), *Pheidole*, *F. nana* Jerdon (1851) = *Tapinoma melanocephalum*, and *F. nana* F. Smith (1858), *Camponotus*.

*F. nitida* Razoumowsky (1789), genus? and *F. nitida* F. Smith (1858), *Camponotus*.

*F. vagans* Olivier (1791), *Eciton*, and *F. vagans* Jerdon (1851), *Prenolepsis*.

These examples will suffice, I believe, to prove the inadvisability of changing the names of these ants, merely because they were classed, at the time of the publication of their descriptions, in the Linnean genus *Formica*, though at the present time relegated to the most diverse genera and even to different subfamilies.

There are also other names which are repeated twice or several times by ancient authors in the genus *Formica*, but as they furnish material for no discussion of interest, I pass over them in silence.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For example:

*F. bicolor* Fabricius (1793), Latreille (1798), Leach (1825), Schilling (1858).  
*F. megacephala* Fabricius (1793), Leach (1825), Losana (1834), etc., etc.